

DULUTH AMERICAN INDIAN COMMISSION MEETING

Monday, March 16, 2009 – 5:00pm

Mayor's Reception Room

Room 405, 4th Floor City Hall

PRESENT: Ricky DeFoe; Donna Ennis; Bea Kitto; Tony LaDeaux; Ron Boshey; Toni Dickenson; Renee K. Van Nett; Michele Gordon

EXCUSED ABSENT: Dr. Joy Dorscher; Warner Wirta

CALL TO ORDER, APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND INTRODUCTIONS:

Co-chair, Ricky DeFoe, called the meeting to order at 5:08 pm. The agenda was approved with the following changes: Under Old Business, item A, "Report from Tony LaDeaux on meeting with John Day regarding potential funding sources" was tabled, as that meeting did not yet happen.

DOLRA representatives called to say they were "on their way but had a flat tire," so they were put into the Agenda for later in the meeting, under Community Public Forum.

Motion by _____, seconded by _____, to approve the agenda with the modifications discussed. The motion was unanimously approved.

Introductions of commissioners and the community followed.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE FEBUARY 23, 2009 MEETING:

Ricky DeFoe asked that a part of last meeting's minutes be changed. The minutes stated that a question had been asked (by Michele Gordon) of Brad Clifford, regarding a statement he made. He stated that his agency, North Star, had had to "clean house with the IRS." Michele Gordon asked him in the meeting if that meant that his agency was in some trouble with the IRS. Brad Clifford did not answer this question. Ricky DeFoe wanted the minutes changed to say that he had answered that question. However, Michele Gordon stated that she recalled he had not answered the question. Thus, a vote was taken by all Commissioners as to how they recalled if this question had been answered, and the unanimous vote was that he, Brad Clifford, had not answered the question.

Motion by _____, seconded by _____, to approve the minutes of the February 23, 2009, Duluth American Indian Commission meeting, as written. The motion was unanimously approved.

COMMUNITY PUBLIC FORUM/OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:

Announcements from John Judd: New Commissioner appointed by the Mayor, Linda Grover, will begin her term on March 31st, and will be present at our next

meeting. She is replacing Dr. Bob Powless. Ms. Grover will be serving a 3-year term.

It was brought to the Commissioners' attention that the Pipe Ceremony has been officially approved to happen in this room of City Hall, and we were asked if the windows could be opened when the ceremony happens. Michele Gordon let the Commissioners know that City Attorney Gunnar Johnson and Chief Administrative Officer, Mark Winson, were very helpful in making this approval happen. Also helpful were the comments of Bob Grytdahl in making this determination. Ricky DeFoe conducted a beautiful Pipe Ceremony before the meeting this evening.

Bob Grytdahl handed out a listing of job opportunities coming up this summer through MN/DOT. Applications will be accepted through March 20, 2009. These job lists were handed out to all commissioners and to community members present.

Buddy Robinson sent a memo to the Commission regarding the sale of tax-forfeit land to Fond du Lac and Boise Forte bands. Basically, this memo was to the St. Louis County (SLC) Commissioners, supporting the sale of this land to these bands. The Citizens Federation Board sent this letter to the SLC Commissioners. It was signed by Marlene Hart, President of the Citizens Federation Board.

OLD BUSINESS:

Officer Shawn McGovern, Crime-Free Multi-Housing Program, on rental housing complaint resolution –

Officer McGovern was not present this evening, so this item was tabled.

Mental Health & CD Sub-committee – need for 3rd Commissioner –

Bea Kitto volunteered to be the third member of this committee, also including Michele Gordon and Donna Ennis.

NEW BUSINESS:

Education Issues – Representatives from ISD 709, Office of Education Equity and Indian Education Programs –

No one present for this item.

Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative – County Attorney Melanie Ford -

SLC Attorney, Melanie Ford, was present and shared an invitation to the launching of the Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative (JDAI). The meeting will be at the Secondary Technical Center at 802 East Central Entrance, Duluth, MN, from 1 pm to 4 pm, Monday, April 6, 2009. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss an assessment of the juvenile justice system and to provide an overview of the JDAI process which is now being worked on. The JDAI process wants to involve and work with community members. The JDAI is looking at the issue of

adolescents of color being the largest numbers in detention, and that this does not reflect the community populations. All community members are invited to attend this meeting and to become involved in the process.

(CONTINUATION OF 3. COMMUNITY PUBLIC FORUM)

DOLRA – Dakota Ojibwe Language Revitalization Alliance - Three presenters came from the Twin Cities to let us know about their language programs, which began small and are now thriving. Their mission is to protect and revitalize the languages of the Dakota and Ojibwe Nations. They are a grassroots effort that was initiated by the American Indian Early Childhood Leaders Circle. The alliance is made up of American Indian early childhood teachers, providers, directors, parents, public policy experts, educators, elders, spiritual leaders, tribal leaders and members and American Indian language activists. Members are primarily from the Dakota and Ojibwe Tribes located in Minnesota, although other tribal members are participating.

This group understands that language revitalization needs to start with the youngest children. Young children do not learn languages, they absorb languages. Children have the capacity to learn several languages easily if they can interact and hear the languages in an everyday way.

The presenters shared their history and stories of how the programs began and how they are doing today. They offered assistance in any way to our area if we pursue setting up language tables and immersions for people in this area.

Names of the three presenters and their phone numbers are:

Jennifer Bendickson – 612-721-4246 or 952-356-6236

Betty Jane Schaaf – 612-721-4246, ext. 15 or 651-366-9175

Margaret Boyer – 612-721-4246

SPEAKER OUT OF ORDER: Ricky DeFoe recognized Bill Morrison, who spoke out of order (not during the appropriate time for public speakers) regarding his complaints about the windows needing to be open for the Pipe Ceremony. He said he was not going to speak tonight, but just listen, so he missed the time frame of the open public comment period. Mr. Morrison complimented the commissioners otherwise, but shared his disagreement with the negotiations that happened and were mentioned earlier in this report by the SLC attorney and by the city administrator, both of whom support our having the Pipe Ceremony.

ANNOUNCEMENTS, UPCOMING EVENTS AND COMMENTS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS:

Michele Gordon announced that we need to have someone from the Commission volunteer to sit on the American Indian Community Housing Organization (AICHO) board, since she and Tony LaDeaux no longer are on that board. This will be looked into more at our next meeting, since no one was willing to

volunteer tonight. Michele stressed that since we are partnering with AICHO for the eventual Indian Center in town, we need to have someone on that board.

Ricky DeFoe also announced that there is a Potluck on March 20th at 5:30 pm at the Red Lake Urban office staffed by Bill Morrison. All are invited.

Commissioners took turns sharing personal thoughts and opinions, ideas, and reflections.

NEXT MEETING/DATE/LOCATION:

The next meeting of the DAIC will be on April 20, 2009, at City Hall, Fourth Floor, at 5 pm.

ANJOURNMENT:

Meeting was adjourned by Co-Chair, Ricky DeFoe, and all voted unanimously to do so.

(The Secretary apologizes for the inconvenience of having deleted the minutes she typed in the meeting, and having to then rely upon memory for this report. If there are those who recall who motioned or seconded the items above, it will be recorded. Also any further data that commissioners want included will be added after the fact.)

Respectfully submitted by,
Michele M. Gordon, DAIC Secretary